NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg

United States Senator for New Hampshire
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SENATOR GREGG SECURES $4.355 MILLION FOR EXPANSION OF UNH AIR QUALITY RESEARCH PROGRAM

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) today announced that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has awarded $4.355 million in federal funding to the University of New Hampshire to improve and expand the Atmospheric Investigations, Regional Monitoring, Analysis, and Prediction Program, which seeks to better measure the air quality in our region and determine the source of individual pollutants. Senator Gregg is the Chairman of the Senate Appropriation Subcommittee that oversees funding for NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

These new resources will provide for the addition of new instruments enabling the program to begin measuring levels of airborne mercury, one of the few sites providing constant near real-time monitoring of this public health problem. The data will be put together by a collective group of researchers at UNH, Plymouth State College and at the Mount Washington Observatory. In addition, the program will begin development of a new monitoring station at Appledore Island on the Isles of Shoals off the NH coast, and a carbon monoxide measurement system on Pack Monadnock in Peterborough, as well as expansion of existing stations in Durham, Castle Springs in Moultonborough, and on the summit of Mount Washington; and a new supercomputing facility for complex modeling of how air pollutants travel from region to region to impact New England's air quality and climate. Senator Gregg has secured over $11 million for the AIRMAP program since Fiscal Year 1999.

Senator Gregg, who continues to work on a measure with several other Senate colleagues that will require the reduction of overall emissions for the four sources of pollution -- sulphur, nitrogen, mercury, and carbon dioxide. stated, “Summer days in New Hampshire are perfect for so many outdoor activities. While sunscreen is an essential to protect against sunburn, there is no protection against poor air quality, something that affects our State and the entire region. Due to the rising concern of the presence of mercury in fish and seafood, the focus of this work on mercury in the air and rainfall is especially important. The tremendous work being done by researchers at UNH, Plymouth State College and at the Mount Washington Observatory, will allow scientists to more accurately identify the source of those pollutants, a critical step in determining how best to make our air cleaner in the future.”

According to AIRMAP Director Robert Talbot, at the UNH Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, “This funding obtained by Senator Gregg will result in a major expansion of the UNH air quality research program. Our monitoring network already is one of the best anywhere, and the addition of instruments to detect airborne mercury and other toxic pollutants at such a station may well be unique in the world. Senator Gregg is enabling New Hampshire to become a global leader in this field.”

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AIRMAP is a cooperative program between the UNH and NOAA designed to provide a detailed understanding of various sources of pollution by studying the dynamics of New England's atmosphere, air quality and weather. The program combines NOAA's atmospheric research with UNH-led systematic monitoring of the region's atmospheric chemistry in order to develop the ability to predict air quality changes as an addition to daily weather forecasts. Increased funds will enable UNH to better partner with NOAA and others on a variety of new air quality programs.

For more information, contact Dr. Robert Talbot at 603-862-1546**.**

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